

Operations Planning Process – Stage 3, Part 1 – Course of Action Development



DPKO & DFS/ ITS - *UN Peacekeeping PDT Standards, Specialized Training Material for Staff Officers 1st Edition 2011*



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Supporting Staff Work

Staff Analysis
Staff Checks & Estimates

Outline
Support Plans

Detailed
Analysis,
Staff Checks
& Estimates

Refined
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The Operational Planning Process

OPP Stage 1 – Initiation

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OPP Stage 2 – Orientation

Review of
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Analysis

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Analysis Brief

Supp Wng O

Mission
Statement

OPP Stage 3 – COA Development

COA
Development

Information
Brief

COA
Comparison
Wargame

CONOPS

Decision
Brief

Supp Wng O

Synch Matrix
Draft

DST Draft

HPTL Draft

EGM

OPP Stage 4 – Plan Development

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Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace

IPB Step 1 – Define the Battlespace

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Air Avenue of
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OPP Stage 5 – Plan Review

Frag O

CONPLAN

IPB Informs All Stages of the OPP

Legend

Staff
Process

Staff
Product

Data

Comd
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Comd
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Process
Flow

Next Task



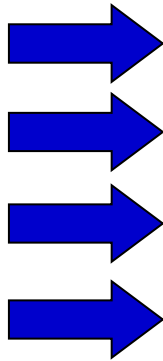
Aim

To provide the Commander with options for solving the problem, to compare those options and to arrive at the best solution



- Review Commander's Planning Guidance (CPG)
- Staff Analysis
- Develop Threat Course of Action (Threat COA)
- Develop Friendly Course of Action (FCOA)

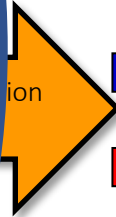
FCOAs



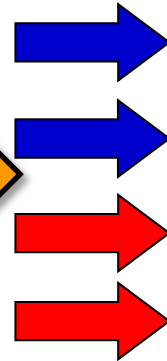
Threat COAs



Information
Brief



COA COMPARISON



Selected
FCOA
and
Threat COA



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COA War
Game

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Decision
Brief

Selected
FCOA



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Course of Action Development

- Prior to commencement
 - Post CPG for all staff to access
 - Review CPG
 - Note COA development guidance and Course of Action Comparison Criteria (CCC)



Course of Action Development

- Staff Analysis:
 - Analysis of factors introduced during Stages 1 and 2
 - Terrain and weather
 - Friendly forces situation, capabilities and limitations
 - Enemy forces situation and capabilities
 - Risk and mitigation
 - Assigned and implied tasks
 - Political considerations/host nation concerns
 - Civil consideration
 - Time and Space
 - Command and control (C2)
 - Sustainment
 - Movement
 - Rules of Engagement (ROE)



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Course of Action Development

- Threat COAs
 - Developed during Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment (IPOE)
 - Most Likely Threat Course of Action (ML Threat COA)
 - Most Dangerous Threat Course of Action (MD Threat COA)
- FCOAs
 - Two or three
 - Viability test



Friendly Course of Action Development

- How can we complete the mission?
- Review doctrine
- What tasks need to be completed?
- What groupings are required to accomplish the tasks?
- Integrate and synchronize (manoeuvre, firepower, C2, logistics, force security, information operations (Info Ops), etc.)
- Create a COA sketch
- Each COA must be viable



Brainstorming

- Free suggestion of ideas
- Draws on group knowledge and experience
- Begins with a statement of the problem, and the requirements which any solution must meet to be initially acceptable
- Lots of ideas
- Ideas are captured and displayed for further analysis: no ideas are rejected at the beginning
- Once an agreed set of ideas has been established, a process of elimination begins
- Elimination process applies experience, current situational awareness and common sense to rule out unsuitable ideas until only a few practical ideas remain
- These can then form the basis for COA development



Theme Method/Effects

- Identifying several broad methods or styles of approach to a solution: these may be drawn in part from the CPG
- Break down into possible sub-themes
- Could focus on effects
- Example:
 - COA 1 – Each unit will be a terrain holder and will provide security, development, reconstruction and governance within their assigned areas
 - COA 2 – Only one unit will own the terrain and provide security throughout the area of operations (AO). One unit will focus on Development and Reconstruction, while the third unit focuses on Governance



Intuitive/Individual Method

- All develop a COA (10-15 minutes)
- Limits group-think
- Review best COAs



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Viability

- Suitability. Staffs must review and test every proposed COA to determine if it can accomplish the military mission and achieve the desired end state.
- Feasibility. Are there sufficient resources available and in-theatre to conduct and sustain the operation?
- Acceptability. Is the COA militarily prudent, that is, do the probable results justify the estimated costs in terms of potential losses in time, materiel and military personnel?
- Exclusivity. Is the COA fundamentally different from the others that are being developed?
- Completeness. Does the COA, as presented, clearly identify the force requirements, timings, phasing, and objectives? Does it answer the questions: Who, What, When, Where, Why and How?



Course of Action Template

<p>Intent:</p> <p>Scheme of Manoeuvre:</p> <p>Main Effort:</p> <p>End State:</p>			<p>GRAPHIC</p>
<p>Advantages</p>	<p>Disadvantages</p>	<p>HVT</p>	



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Concept of Operations (1/2)

- Intent
 - Drafted by the Commander, finished by staff
 - Contains what
 - What effects are required
 - Success criteria
 - Statement of risk
- SoM
 - Paint the picture and explain what tasks will be done
 - Plan two levels down (note: special subunits, platoons, or detachments)
 - Phase end and transition criteria



Concept of Operations (2/2)

- Main Effort
 - Effect by phase
- End State
 - What will be the force disposition at the end of the mission?
 - Follow on tasks
 - Where will the force be?



Course of Action Features

- CONOPS
 - Intent
 - Scheme of Manoeuvre (SoM)
 - Main Effort
 - End State
- Graphics
- Advantages/disadvantages



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How to Differentiate a Course of Action

- Intent
- SoM linked to doctrine (Offence, Defence, Stability) and phased
- Main effort by phase
- End state
- Groupings and tasks

Note: CCC remain the same



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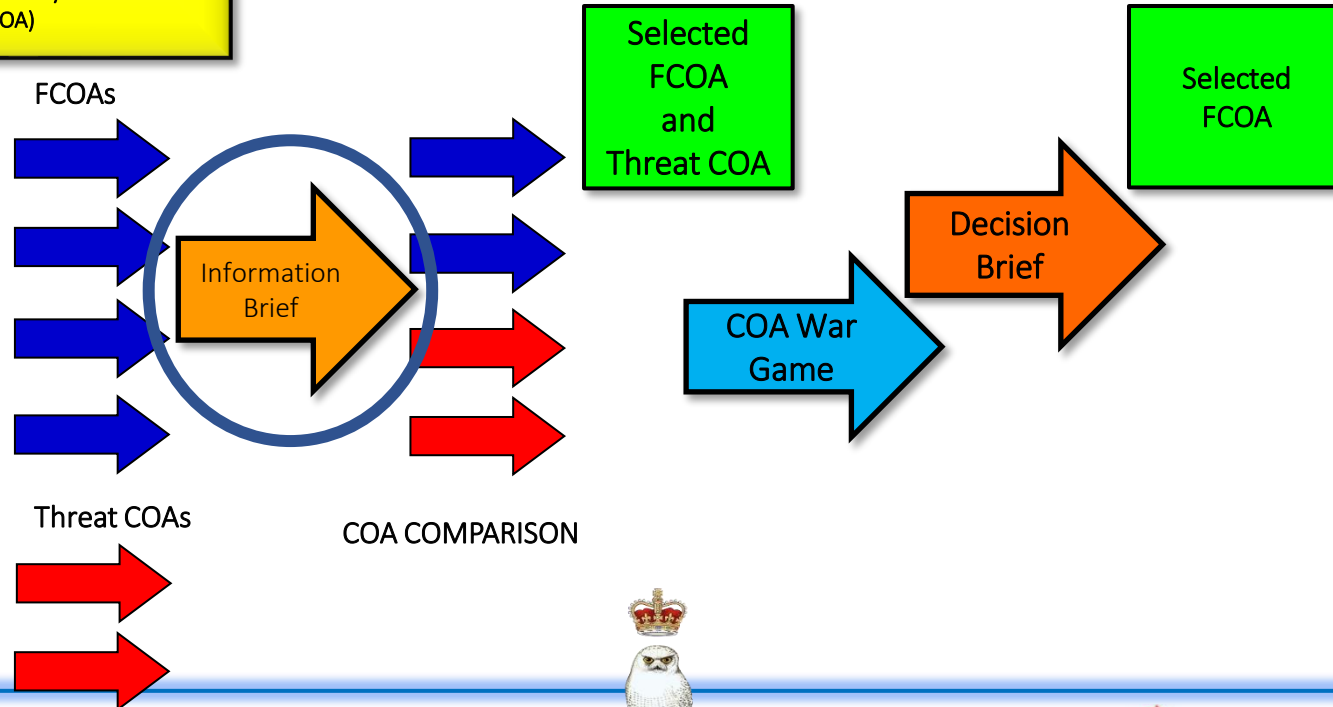


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